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**The Fogg Museum of Harvard University**



*A Lohan (Saint)*

*Sino-Tibetan Painting, Late Fourteenth Century*

The Fogg Museum of Harvard University

CERTAIN improvements were made in the Fogg Museum last Summer which have increased the exhibition room. The first use to which the new space has been put proved so satisfactory that it is probable it will be occupied from now on by a series of loan and special exhibitions.

For some weeks past there has been shown a series of remarkable paintings by Matahei, lent by Dr. Ross.

Matahei was a Japanese artist of the early years of the seventeenth century to whom are ascribed the earliest works of the popular or Ukiyoe School. His tradition was close enough to that of the academy to give his painting a dignity and power not often seen in the work of the men who succeeded him; while at the same time as a pioneer of new expression he always shows freshness and vivacity.

In another special exhibition room there remain on view a number of Lamaist paintings from Tibet, dating from the last two and three hundred years, and two others from not later than the beginning of the fifteenth century which are particularly remarkable. While the subjects of these two are Lamaist and the style is proper to the subject, it is probable that they were painted in Peking rather than in Tibet itself; for the work is far more subtle than the examples which hang near, and is directly in the proper Chinese tradition of Sung Buddhist painting.

Of Sung lay painting a hint may be had from a small picture, much subdued by time, but still full of the early simplicity and charm of directness. It is called "The Sisters," and though the date cannot be exactly fixed, the manner is that of the Sung masters.

Japanese Buddhist art is represented by five pictures, one, that of the God Jizo, the Merciful, dating from the end of the fourteenth century. It is a good example of the Japanese painting which was inspired by Sung and Yuan artists of China, but which has a distinctive Japanese delicacy of its own.

What the tendency of Japanese Buddhist art was in Ashikaga times (from the middle of the fourteenth century to the end of the sixteenth) may be seen from the small painting of Amida with his two attendants, Kwannon and Seishi. There is the love of detail which came in with the end of the period. Over-refined perhaps it may be, but there is still spirit in the delicacy and great feeling for design in the whole. A larger painting of the same subject hanging nearby has suffered much from ill-judged restoration, but there is a suggestion of earlier glories which is not lost under the crudities of modern gold.

The small panel darkened to nearly a monotone by age and the smoke of daily incense is a Dai Nichi Mandara, a formal arrangement of deities centering about the Dai Nichi (Great Light). It is of the hieratic school of pictures produced by

priestly artists for worship in the temples. Formal as it is, the intention is so obvious and the design so pleasing that it takes place as a matter of course in this exhibition. It probably was painted toward the close of the sixteenth century.

Technically under the head of Buddhist painting comes the impressive portrait of a monk seated in a large chair, with his shoes on a footstool before him. It represents a bishop of the Zen sect, painted after the manner of the Sung and Yuan masters in China, who subtly introduced into the accepted Buddhist style something of the manner of the lay painters, proper to the portrayal of an individual.

The single Chinese Buddhist picture dates from the middle decades of the Ming period (A. D. 1368-1628). It is an embroidery, and as such the lines, which are next of kin to the original brush strokes, would seem ill-fitted for that technique. As a matter of fact, there is an air of simplicity that defies such criticism. The subject is the familiar one of the deity Kwanyin in female form, with a child on her knee. To the left are two small worshippers making offerings, and by the side, at the edge of the mat on which the goddess is seated, is a branch of weeping willow in a flask, toward which the child is reaching out with a spray in its hands. Arching overhead spring slender bamboos, half obliterated by misty clouds.

From the point of view of the archaeologist the most interesting addition to this exhibition consists of a dozen stone sculptures of the so-called "Gandhara" School, several of which have never before been exhibited in this country.

Even before the days of the Persian Empire, Greeks, or people from Greek colonies, had drifted across Asia to Northern Afghanistan. Darius sent ships down the Indus and home by sea; then Alexander led his great expedition to India in the first half of the fourth century before Christ, and returning left certain of his captains to govern the satrapies he had established.

These outposts of Greek civilization with their colonial craftsmen and classical traditions were powerful enough to influence the forms of religious art of Eastern Asia for all time.

The Buddhist sculptures now on exhibition at the Fogg Museum were found in Northern India and show the original form—part Greek, part Buddhist. These particular stone carvings are extraordinarily interesting. The interest, however, is not entirely archaeological, and though much of the work of this type is not remarkable for beauty, four at least from among this group have real charm.

In particular, the large head of Buddha with the short ringlets, although cut from extremely hard stone, is comparable to the work of the other colonial craftsmen who carried the Greek tradition to different parts of the Mediterranean world.

L. W.